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UNDER AN OVERLOAD OF MISINFORMATION

Is the Way That Van Brunt Says
Judge Culver Figured Out
His Ideas

AND CAUSED HIM TO
OVERSTATE MATTERS

Tells the True Story of Why St. Joseph Is Not Now Connected With the Kansas Natural Gas Fields and Cites the Authorities to Show That His Statements Are Correct and Are Borne Out by the Facts in the Case.

"Editor News-Press: Judging solely from certain statements contained in the communication of Judge Culver, which appeared in yesterday's edition of The News-Press, the writer is forced to the conclusion that the judge was laboring under an overload of misinformation, or that he was from some cause, real or imaginary, just a wee bit peeved when he wrote the article. I do not for one moment believe that Judge Culver would knowingly misstate facts. His statement, however, to the effect that the 'Doherty people' are responsible for the loss of natural gas to the city of St. Joseph, is far from the truth.

"Natural gas was formerly furnished to St. Joseph by the Kansas Natural Gas Company, which is now, and for several years has been, in the hands of a receiver, and its affairs are being administered by the federal court.

"About a year ago the pipes extending across the Missouri River were washed away. Federal Judge Booth at once appointed an expert engineer to make a thorough investigation and to report to him as to the amount of money it would be necessary to expend in order to restore such pipes, and when it was reported that even a temporary crossing, which might again be washed out at any time, could not be made for less than about \$100,000, the court refused to permit the expenditure as not being justified by any possible returns.

But Recently Acquired
"It is a fact that the Doherty people have comparatively recently acquired an interest in the Kansas natural gas properties. It is also true that when the federal court refused to restore natural gas to St. Joseph, Mr. Doherty personally endeavored to purchase the old Leavenworth bridge at an enormous price, solely for the purpose of aiding the court in restoring gas to St. Joseph. All these facts are of record and can easily be verified. There are attorneys and others in St. Joseph who have been interested in and who are familiar with the natural gas litigation, and who can verify every word here said. One of these attorneys has been making some effort to gain secure natural gas for our city, and it is largely through his efforts, we believe, the present agitation for natural gas has been started.

"All these facts were readily obtainable and just why Judge Culver should have stated that the 'Doherty people' were responsible for the loss of our supply of natural gas, I will leave it to him to explain.

"It is estimated that it would require an investment of approximately \$200,000 to provide facilities for again supplying St. Joseph with natural gas, and if anyone thinks that the 'Doherty people' are 'tearing their shirts' to expand that sum of money for that purpose at this time and under present circumstances, such person needs medical attention.

Not Able to Follow His Line

"It is suggested by Judge Culver that for the city to own and operate a commercial power and lighting plant would not constitute municipal ownership. He also argues that there is no similarity between government ownership and operation of railroads, telegraph and telephone wires, from which control and operation he asks the good Lord to speedily deliver us, and municipal ownership. We are unable to follow his line of reasoning. Certainly it cannot be said that our national government is less efficient than our average American municipal governments. The strongest argument that the opponents of our form of government have ever advanced is the notoriously bad governments of our cities. I believe the average American citizen would be loath to say that our average cities are even tolerably well governed. If, therefore, our national government—the best on earth—cannot efficiently and successfully control a little thing like a telephone company, how can we expect that our home-ruled, home-ruled, and home-controlled American cities will succeed better in that regard? I would not be understood as in any way reflecting upon our present very high-grade city government, but elec-

tions come ground with irritating regularity, and city administrations change between two years. Too often one administration goes down advocating clean, efficient business government, and someone else rides in upon a hobby horse made of 3-cent fares, or some other vote-getting device. It is this fellow and his followers and their kind who have made a failure and a farce of municipal ownership in our cities, and who can say that he is not the man who will control the destinies of our city next year or the year after?

"It is only necessary for one to exercise a little judgment, to look around and view the wrecks of municipal ownership in 'no man's land' in order to understand that the experiment never has and never can succeed in our cities under modern conditions.

Why Not Go "In Business?"

"If it would not be considered municipal ownership for the city to own and operate a commercial electric light and power plant, would it be considered municipal ownership should the city own and operate its water, gas and telephone plants and its other public utilities, and if not, and if it would be wise for the city to engage in commercial lighting, upon the theory that it would make money thereby, and at the same time better serve its citizens, why not take over the other utilities above named and make more money, and thereby better serve all the people; and then a little later on why not take over other business enterprises in our city which pay better than the public utilities, and which would make still more money for the city?

"It is suggested by Judge Culver that the city should light its streets, boulevards, parks and other public places, thereby leaving the impression that nothing more is intended to be accomplished with the proposed municipal plant. We had understood that the city, with \$500,000 of bonds, intended to build and equip a plant with ample capacity to light the entire city, and that it intended to enter the arena of commercial, competitive lighting and to bring light like sunshine to the homes of the poor and the palaces of the rich, at prices that could not be missed from the monthly wage of the laborer or the fat income of the 'malefactors of great wealth.'

"Was the statement of Judge Culver intended to allay the fears of those timid ones who might shy at the menacing shadow of approaching municipal ownership, or is the fact at last dawning upon those who think that a \$200,000 plant would be wholly and ridiculously inadequate for the purposes for which it is proposed to build it?

J. H. VAN BRUNT.

THE UNDENIABLE FACTS

"Do you believe in prohibition?"
"Believe in it!" echoed Bill Bottletop. "I've got to believe it. At present it's one of the most obvious facts in our community."

The Spirit of Senator Stone

The spirit of the late Senator W. J. Stone, the wise man who kept the democratic party in power in Missouri for more than a quarter of a century, must have been hovering around State Chairman Neale when he quietly deposited the convention petition in the waste basket and adjourned, and thus greatly disappointed every republican politician in Missouri—Moberly Democrat.

According to the Springfield Leader, Southwest Missouri has four giant springs which are among the largest in the world. They are the Greer spring in Oregon county, Bennett spring in Dallas county, Merenc spring in Phelps county and the Ha Ha Tonka spring in Camden county. A movement is on foot to have the state purchase all four and stock the waters with the finest game fish.

As the result of idle gossip and vicious rumors T. B. Saunders, a most estimable young farmer of the Iatan neighborhood, was arrested Saturday on suspicion of having killed Henry Moore, the Armour station agent. He was released Sunday when his innocence was absolutely established.

Martha Lane wants a divorce from Martin S. Lane, alleging non-support.

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LOCAL MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST

A thief broke into the home of Henry Lane, 1916 South Sixth, Wednesday forenoon and stole a bundle of clothing.

This was clean-up week and conditions are a little better in consequence.

Mrs. Cora Bell Talman died at her home, 1407 Mitchell avenue, Tuesday night.

Look—Now is the time to have your wallpaper cleaned before the spring rush. You get the best workmen and cheaper prices. Boston Window Cleaning Co. Phone Main 1690. Also janitor and housecleaning supplies for sale.—(Adv.)

The John S. Brittain estate has donated a large number of early pictures and historical works to the public library.

About 100 returned soldiers met Tuesday night and elected Donald W. Cronkite delegate and Elmer Thomas alternate to attend the first national convention in St. Louis.

Mrs. A. D. Achtenberg, president of the local chapter for Jewish relief, has forwarded the last contribution to the general committee in New York. The total sum asked has been raised.

O. B. Castle, a returned soldier, has filed a suit in circuit court for \$10,000, against Julius and Mary Heuschle, parents of his wife, whom he alleges alienated the affections of his wife while he was absent fighting the battles of his country. When he returned she refused to live with him.

District Attorney Francis M. Wilson argued the Leslie E. Clark case before the federal court in St. Paul, Minn., Tuesday. Clark is the deputy sheriff charged with tampering with the draft board last year.

Ensign Byron L. Spencer of the naval aviation section, stationed at Pensacola, is home visiting his father, Richard L. Spencer, for a few days.

A building to cost approximately \$20,000 will be erected on the north side of Felix between Seventh and Eighth for Maxwell, the peweler.

Typographical Union No. 40 is preparing to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the organization.

THEY HAD ENOUGH

Starkey and His Son Had a Thrilling Voyage on the Trencherous Missouri.

At the Union station Tuesday among the passengers who arrived that morning and who were obliged to stay over until afternoon for an Omaha train were W. A. Starkey and his son Arthur, the latter fifteen years of age, who reside at 2104 South Thirteenth street, Omaha. The couple were on their return from a fifteen hundred mile trip down the Missouri river which ended at St. Louis, and as the elder Starkey emphatically stated ended "all of my trips on the durned Missouri."

In a thirty-one foot boat on Oct. 28 last year the two left Omaha for a float to St. Louis. The boat was of their own construction. They reached St. Louis Dec. 14—and quit. In speaking of the trip the elder Starkey said:

"Whirlpools, snags, floating two days in ice and an encounter with a coon helped make the trip most exciting," says Starkey. "It was below Kansas City where I ran into an ice floe. All I had aboard was a pair of oars, the current just picked us up and we were powerless to land. For two days we were tossed and jostled around at the will of the ice pack. Projecting snags and rocks added to the excitement. At last, nearly exhausted, we were able to make shore and that very night I heard a beating against the cabin window. Going out, I found a coon and I made vain attempts to drive him away.

"I called my dog but the coon backed into the bow of the boat and defied the dog to come. I was afraid to shoot, as it was dark and I didn't want to damage the boat. I called my son and at last after a twenty minutes' battle we shot the coon.

"The next day we ran into a whirlpool. We were whirled around and around. Snags were projecting out of the water and each moment we feared we would crash against one of them and be swamped. After several hours of desperate fighting, we safely navigated out of the pool and the remainder of our journey was uneventful.

"We made the trip for pleasure. We fished, hunted and trapped along the way, but when I sold my boat in St. Louis we were satisfied to return by rail."

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